



## *New U.S. ambassador reconnects with Angola*

Ambassador Nina Maria Fite brought ample experience with her when she became the ninth U.S. ambassador to Angola in January.

She is a career member of the Foreign Service who has served in high-profile diplomatic positions around the world. Notably, one of her previous positions was as the Political/Economic Section chief in Angola.

Amb. Fite also has served in Montreal, Canada; Lahore, Pakistan; Kabul, Afghanistan; Budapest, Hungary; Lisbon, Portugal; Kingston, Jamaica; and Washington, D.C., among other locations.



She's known for her expertise in multi-national trade and economic-development agreements and for her contributions to environmental accords. Amb. Fite completed a master's degree in national resource strategy at the National Defense University in Washington and a master's degree in international management at the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Phoenix, Arizona. She also earned a bachelor's degree of architecture at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

During a recent wide-ranging interview at the U.S. embassy, she discussed her involvement in earlier projects in Angola and how that work has influenced current U.S.-Angolan endeavors. She also noted how the passage of time has impeded the view from at least one office window at the U.S. embassy.

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## *Amb. Fite: Past experiences ease transition here*

**Question: What are the advantages to returning to Angola, a country where you've worked before?**

**Answer:** It's wonderful to be able to come back to a place of which I have very fond memories – and a good working knowledge of the country and some of its challenges.

Clearly, I have to update my knowledge. But it helps that I speak the language and I know where some of the different neighborhoods are, so I'm not learning everything from scratch. I understand a lot of the history – the colonial and post-colonial history. I've spoken to people who lived through that era, too.

**Q: What were immediate impressions upon returning?**

**A:** I hadn't visited Angola since I left in 2007, so I was very interested in seeing how the country had progressed. I had kept up on some things that had happened in between, but being on the ground is different. I was very interested in seeing all the development and changes in Angola.

Clearly, the Luanda skyline looks much different than it did 10 years ago. That's a direct benefit from the boom in oil prices. There was a lot of money for development. That's one of the most obvious signs. Another is development in Talatona, the shopping centers. When I left, the Shop Rite in Talatona had opened about a month earlier. Intermarket was here, but no other large supermarkets.

**Q: You have a unique perspective. What were the areas of emphasis during your first tour here?**

**A:** It was 2005, just a couple of years after the civil war had ended. There were far more non-governmental organizations around at that time. There were many Doctors Without Borders and de-mining organizations. There was a lot of development assistance from various countries. That's still happening, but at a much lower rate.

Angola was getting ready for its first elections, so there was a lot of work and support in helping educate people who had gone through all those years of a civil war without elections.

There was institutional support to the Angolan government at the time, helping them develop an election platform and computer systems in order to have elections. We supported NGOs that worked with the sobas [traditional leaders] and communities to help them educate people. How would an election work? What would a ballot look like, particularly in a country with high rates of illiteracy?

**Q: It's interesting that you were working on election procedures a decade ago. Angola just had a presidential election in August. What's your assessment?**

**A:** With every election we're seeing a higher comfort level. There are lessons each one that are applied to the next one. And as we saw in the last election, there were significant gains for the opposition parties, which goes to show that the system has evolved and there are more points of view.

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## *Amb. Fite: Efforts on transparency continue*

**Q: What were the other areas of concentration during your first assignment here?**

**A:** Some of the same ones we have today – transparency, trying to support U.S. business. The petroleum industry was expanding at that time.

The Foreign Commercial Service didn't have the presence here that it has today. Thus, the embassy's Political/Economic Section took on advocacy for companies, as well as making sure people understood when tenders were open and keeping track of some of the processes.



Also at the time, we were trying to help develop civil society by supporting capacity building, in conjunction with non-government organizations. We used tools like the International Visitor Leadership Program and other USAID-sponsored training programs.

Angola was one of the original countries for the President's Malaria Initiative, so there were bed net distribution programs.

**Q: The mortality rate for children under five years old has fallen by nearly a quarter since then, right?**

**A:** We've made improvements in reducing the rate of malaria, but we still have an incredibly long way to go. We had a lot of

very strong public/private partnerships at that time, and I'm delighted to see we maintain a lot of those partnerships with U.S. companies.

**Q: Any other changes?**

**A:** Yes, one funny thing. I arrived about two weeks after we moved into the current embassy. From my office, I could see the Ilha and the ocean. Now, because the trees have grown, we don't have that same view.

**Q: On another topic, what's your agenda as ambassador?**

**A:** The U.S. government sees Angola as a stable country and as a model of democratic stability in the region. The fact is that former President José Eduardo dos Santos stepped down and Angola had an election.

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## *Amb. Fite: Anti-corruption messages resonate*

Whereas if you look at some of the neighboring countries, that transition hasn't always been as smooth.

We also see Angola participating in regional organizations such as the South African Development Community and the African Union. We see it contributing forces to peace-keeping missions, such as in Lesotho. These are all good signs of Angola's role in regional stability.

The bilateral economic issues continue to be one of our greatest priorities. We're encouraged by President João Lourenço's discussions and statements about anti-corruption. We would prefer a more transparent and fair business platform. We'd like to see a business environment that is conducive for U.S. companies, because ultimately we have a lot of faith in U.S. products and services.

And, of course, we are very interested in protecting the rights of American citizens abroad. That's one of our core missions.

**Q: Getting back to economic matters, what do you see as the greatest opportunities for American and Angolan businesses to work together?**

**A:** There are many opportunities for businesses of each country to partner.

I want to give a special shout-out to so many of our American companies that have fully supported "Angolanization," companies that hire Angolans for 85 to 90 percent of their employees. In many cases, companies have invested years of training and education in their employees. This is important because it supports Angola's economic development and capacity building.

Ultimately, our goal is for Angola to graduate from U.S. development assistance. Angola already is on the verge of becoming a middle-income country. The difference between a middle-income country and a lower-income country is the ability to develop and use its own capability to meet its challenges.

**Q: Which business sectors are best positioned for those partnerships?**

**A:** Angola is trying to develop its non-petroleum economy, so the government is looking for partnerships in developing its natural resources, such as agriculture and fishing. Manufacturing is another area the government is trying to focus on. For this we need more transparency and protections for American companies and multi-national companies.

**Q: In terms of protections, you're speaking about judicial systems, correct?**

**A:** Yes. These are protections that any American company would look for in any country where it invests. When you look at a country like Angola that is becoming a middle-income country, there is more disposable income, so it becomes a more interesting market.

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## *Amb. Fite: Embassy serves as citizens' advocate*

**Q: On a different topic, since you're an old pro in Angola, what's your must-see recommendation for newly arrived Americans?**

**A:** I think the National Museum of Slavery is fascinating place to visit, particularly when you understand the connection between Angola and the U.S. South, and the percentage of people with Angolan ancestry who went to the United States. It's a very valuable insight.

The museum is just about 45 minutes south of downtown Luanda, along the coast.

**Q: Anything else?**

**A:** I want let people know that we're always interested in hearing from Americans about their experiences in Angola. We want to be advocates, so if there are issues we need to know about, we look forward to hearing from them.





## Fees for some U.S. passports just went up by \$10

**T**he execution fee several common types of U.S. passports increased from \$25 to \$35, effective April 2, 2018

The \$10 increase applies to passport applicants who use the DS-11 form. Those applicants include first-time passport-seekers over 16 years of age, all children under 16, and travelers who reapply for passports after reporting their previous passports lost or stolen.

Customers applying with the DS-11 form at U.S. Embassy Luanda, or other U.S. embassies or consulates abroad, pay two separate fees: the standard application fee to the U.S. Department of State and the ex-

ecution fee to the Passport Acceptance Facility.

U.S. Embassy Luanda will continue to process passports for Americans in Angola. The embassy only accepts cash, in either dollars or kwanzas.

The \$10 fee increase does not apply to adults eligible to renew their passports using the DS-82 form.

The fee increase had been in process for months and the Department of State published its Final Rule confirming the fee change on Jan. 31, 2018.

Americans with questions about passports or other services may contact the embassy at [ConsularLuanda@state.gov](mailto:ConsularLuanda@state.gov).

## Consular contact information

[ConsularLuanda@state.gov](mailto:ConsularLuanda@state.gov)

<https://ao.usembassy.gov/>

(244) 222-641-000 (business hours)

(244) 923-404-209 (emergency after-hours)

Our American Citizen Services hours are 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, excluding official holidays.

For notaries and non-emergency passport services, make appointments via: <https://ao.usembassy.gov/>.

## Embassy closure dates ahead

The U.S. Embassy closes for official U.S. and Angolan holidays. Here are the upcoming closure dates:

**May 28** — U.S. Memorial Day

**July 4** — U.S. Independence Day

**Sept. 2** — U.S. Labor Day

**Sept. 17** — Angolan National Hero's Day

**Oct. 8** — U.S. Columbus Day

**Nov. 2** — Angolan Memorial Day

## Embassy wants to reach Americans during crises

The **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** allows Americans to register with the U.S. Embassy when they travel overseas. The program provides embassy officers the means to reach Americans during emergencies abroad and in times of need for their families back home.

Americans should keep their contact info updated, because it may be the only way for them to be contacted during critical times. Travelers can enroll in the program and edit their info at <https://step.state.gov/step/> or at the U.S. embassy during American Citizen Services

## Seeking suggestions for future editions of the newsletter

The AmCit is designed for American citizens who live and work in Angola.

Our goal is to provide relevant and useful information. What topics would you like to know more about? How can we make this forum as useful as possible?

Send your comments, questions and suggestions via email to:

[ACSLuanda@state.gov](mailto:ACSLuanda@state.gov).